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424 as possible, a potlatch is the most suitable occasion. Goods
463 distributed for this purpose are not returnable; they have
"become nothing" in the acquisition. The value of presents so
* 556 bestowed differs enormously; a man who is proud of his prerogative validates it lavishly until he is strong in his vocation, whereas another establishes himself on a lesser scale. The origin
[773] of professional rights, like so many of other kinds, is lost in antiquity and ascribed to the wishes of *Ałquntām* as expressed to the first people. Some of the early settlers came to earth
[551] with definite duties and vocations, each indicated by a special name; others, lacking these, created them through their own
424 enormous power. At the death of one of these incumbents,
463 his name passed to one of his relatives who acted in the same
553 manner as his predecessor after duly validating the name in question. Ever since that time, the owner of a confirmed pro-
* 556 fessional name has been able to perform the functions of the prerogative. This is never a man's sole designation, but merely
[551] an addition to those of ancestral, *kusiut*, *sisaok*, and other types. Like them, professional names are usually willed by their owners, though if this is neglected, one can be revived by any member of the deceased's ancestral family. In such a case, the older people usually decide on a suitable incumbent and suggest the matter to him; if he does not accept, the opportunity is given to another. If a member of the group is eager to validate the name, it is unlikely that anyone would try to
[789] forestall him. Ability in certain respects can also be obtained by magical means (I, p. 701), and a member of the ancestral family so endowed is the natural choice for the prerogative in question.

Prerogatives of this kind can be grouped according to the types of vocation included.

424 463 551 • 693 773

THE PROFESSION OF RIVER GUARDIAN

In the beginning of time, *Ałquntām* is said to have sent down with *Ḳeił*, who landed on the mountain behind *Ḳomḳo·ti*,

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a man, *ux·winaisa*, with the prerogative of enforcing obedience to river taboos. Ever since, the owner of this name, when it has been duly legalized, has had the right to perform this function. In some cases, such as carpenters and singers, the validation of a prerogative has not brought with it the necessary ability, so that the incumbent remains a properly ratified, but non-functioning, craftsman. No mechanical skill is required by a River Guardian, hence the owner of the name *ux·winaisa* has always been able to perform his duties.

From time immemorial certain restrictions have been enforced concerning the river: No refuse may be thrown in, otherwise the olachen would remain in the ocean. For the same reason, women at certain periods are not allowed to bathe lest a speck of blood should blind the fish and prevent them from seeing the route. Occasionally an olachen with red eyes is caught; this is caused by some heedless woman. When the fish are running in the river, women are not allowed on the bank, nor to repair the nets. At high tide, it is forbidden to drive stakes for olachen nets.

The number of prohibitions increases during the critical period of the salmon run. Then no freshly hewn planks can be set afloat, and even a canoe which has just been completed must be kept for ten days before launching. No one whose husband or wife has died within the last year can embark at the village, but must proceed to a landing-place at the head of the fiord. Most important of all, refuse of salmon must be deposited in the woods; if thrown into the river, the fish would smell it and avoid the stream. Even accidents such as the upsetting of a canoe, or the spilling of olachen grease, are considered to be offences.

Disregard of any of these injunctions is displeasing to the salmon and it is the duty of the River Guardian to punish the offender, irrespective of his rank. In case of slight infringements, he beats the guilty person or throws him into the river. The guilty person usually scrambles out, but should he be swept away and drowned, no recompense can be claimed by

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688 his relatives. This punishment is customary in cases of the
693 upsetting of a canoe. Death is the penalty for throwing refuse
[177] into the river, particularly during the summer, and until the coming of the white man the River Guardian exacted it without hesitation.

THE PROFESSION OF UTTERING A DRONING CRY

424 At the appearance of masked figures representing super-
551 natural beings, whether in *ssaok* or *kusiut* dances, many of the
[575] women repeatedly utter a peculiar, high-pitched, droning cry
[463] which adds considerably to the weirdness and impressiveness
[431] of the occasion. Ability to do this depends on an ancestral
[773] prerogative duly confirmed by the distribution of presents. Many ancestral myths describe how some of the first women were given by *Älquntäm*, or acquired in other ways, the right to drone, and mention is made of the name used by each with respect to this prerogative. Unlike the one previously described, many of the first women possessed this privilege, which is accordingly common at the present time. A name
[553] of this type is usually confirmed in girlhood, sometimes even in infancy, and being of relatively slight importance may be validated at a ceremony of less dignity than a potlatch. One of these names is *Nunuqwelelslaixen·a*, which has reference to
[773] the blue-green sheen of some abalone-shell brought from the east by Raven in the beginning of time, as described in the ancestral myth in which this name is included. For many
[178] years there has been considerable laxity with regard to this prerogative, and women lacking it have even been urged to drone in order to add to the solemnity of the occasion and to increase the wonder of the uninitiated.

424 There is another similar prerogative, enabling the incum-
767 bent to drone at mourning ceremonies. In the beginning of
463 time, *Smaoan* of Kimsquit married *Tläkwaitl*, the daughter of
793 a Bella Bella chief, who had this right. It has since been transmitted from one of her descendants to another at Kimsquit.

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701 difficult to estimate the former influence of such warriors. The belief of all in their ability must have given them some prestige, although the requirements of practical qualifications in fighting must often have prevented them from functioning as military leaders. In other words, a man may be, socially, a warrior, even though he lacks ability as a fighting man.

701 The functions of warriors are not limited to fighting with enemies of other tribes. Each has the power to kill and must 693 exercise it when requested. If a mistake is made in a ceremonial *kusiut* dance, the offender must be killed, and one way in which this is accomplished is by the senior members of the society requesting a professional warrior to act as executioner. One of these men, who lived at *Äsän·än·i*, always used a stone club which had been handed down from generation to generation, becoming the property of each new incumbent of the name and prerogative. In other cases, the killing is said to have been done with the aid of magic. The power of the *Äsän·än·i* warrior had been confirmed with so much goods that he was the most powerful professional killer known to the Bella Coola. He acted on instructions from the senior members of the *kusiut* society or when called upon by anyone. If, for example, a man found that his wife had been faithless and wished to kill her lover, it was only necessary to tell the professional warrior, who was bound to act in accordance with his prerogative. He received no pay, since he was merely exercising his right. The relatives of the murdered person never took revenge on the slayer, realizing that he was powerless in the matter, though they frequently requested him to slay the person who had asked him to kill the first victim. He could never refuse to do so, even if the victim were his own brother, or if he knew that the person he was to kill was guiltless. The underlying principle was that this man's power had been increased to such a pitch by the distribution of presents that if he failed to exercise it on demand, it would react upon himself and cause his own death. This *Äsän·än·i* warrior began in time to have an aversion for his vocation, since he

[688] [575] [428] [411] [754] [684] [682] [761]

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was being feared and hated by all. Yet his prerogative was so strong that he could not cease to act. He found by chance a cave near the top of precipitous Mount *Nusimusta*, not far from his village, and told everyone that he would die there, where no one would ever be able to spit or tread upon his grave. One autumn, when an old man, he disappeared, and although search parties scoured the woods for him, they were unsuccessful. Next spring, some young men visited the cave in which they found his badly decomposed corpse; the warrior had kept his promise.

The profession of warrior carries with it prohibitions and requirements other than with regard to killing. Such men are thought always to be so wild and restless that they cannot sleep at night, but prowl around the village watching for possible foes. In actual fact, warriors seldom sleep quietly throughout the night. They have one restriction of a social nature, in that they can never be confined in the back-room as initiates into the *sisaok* society. Consequently, no *tutwinam* ever comes to one of them. When one gives a potlatch, a rather boastful song is sung for him as he remains in the central part of the house. What affiliation this brings him with the *sisaok* society is obscure.

It is difficult to say to what extent a professional warrior believes in his own powers, since there is, and must always have been, great individual variation. The white man finds it difficult to understand the psychology of a man who considers himself bound to kill on request, simply because presents have been distributed to make him a warrior. It must be remembered that this is one of the most pervasive features of Bella Coola life; functions of all kinds depend upon validated prerogatives, and there is no doubt that a man who has one of this kind is actually influenced to such an extent that he begins to believe in his own prowess. It was unusual for a warrior to exercise his powers as freely as did the *Ăsăn·ăn·i* man, but the Bella Coola have no difficulty in explaining this:—his prerogative had been confirmed with more lavish expenditure